

RICHARD F. STAPLES, JR.

May 13, 2022

The Town of Barrington's next Financial Town Meeting (FTM) will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, in the Barrington High School Auditorium for registered voters to consider and pass the Town's 2022-2023 Fiscal Year Budget for School and Municipal Operations and Capital Investments and conduct other business included in the Meeting Warrant being issued on May 18. As Moderator of the FTM, I would like to offer a few suggestions to help the meeting move as smoothly and quickly as possible, while also recognizing the right for every registered voter to be heard on the important matters that will be before us that evening:

1. Consider the work already done by your Committee on Appropriations (COA) toward their recommended budget being presented at the FTM. COA members, elected at the FTM for two-year terms, have served as your representatives in reviewing, debating and, in some cases, modifying the draft municipal and school budgets presented to them for their review earlier this year. Electronic versions of detailed COA meeting minutes and related materials are available on the Town of Barrington's website - <https://clerkshq.com/barrington-ri> - and video recordings of all meetings can be found on the COA page - www.barrington.ri.gov/committee-on-appropriations.

Consider, also, the work and report of the Budget Forecasting Committee (BFC) that meets earlier in the fiscal year, with members representing the COA, Town Council and School Committee. Its charge is to do a situational analysis of Town finances into the future to help the Council and Committee with their budget-setting work in anticipation of the COA budget review meetings in the second half of the fiscal year. The BFC completes its work in January with an annual report, which includes more context on some funding and expense categories not impacted by the FTM but that are often of perennial interest to taxpayers, most notably capital and reserve accounts and pension contributions. This report can be found on the Town's web site at <https://www.barrington.ri.gov/budgetforecastcomm>.

2. Calling the FTM to order at 7:00 p.m. requires a quorum of 100 registered voters. If that quorum is met by 7:00 p.m., the meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. We will be meeting in the Barrington High School Auditorium, which we anticipate will be sufficient seating for the expected turnout, and we are also preparing the cafeteria for overflow, with a video link. However, all comments, questions and voting will be done in the Auditorium.

3. Once again, a 3-minute time limit will be in effect for questions and comments from the floor to give all who wish to speak the opportunity to do so. Moving a motion to a vote can only happen once everyone who wishes to speak has had their turn at the microphone and all questions or comments should be directed to the Moderator. The Town Clerk is requesting that taxpayers speaking at the microphone clearly state their name and address for the official meeting record, and that any new budget amendment motion presented from the floor be provided in writing, as well.
4. The process of voting by standing votes or paper ballot can be time-consuming, so we will be trying to manage that process more efficiently this year by requesting row-by-row voting. There will be volunteers at the meeting, wearing yellow lanyards, to help move things along and I ask for your cooperation with their instructions. Also, please remember that there are important votes at the end of the meeting – official adoption of the COA's recommended budget, with amendments, the resulting tax levy and tax rate, and election of two members to the COA. These all deserve your attention and votes, so please stick around for them.

Registered voters in the Town of Barrington are fortunate to have this opportunity to participate directly and democratically in the presentation and approval of an annual Town Budget that provides services to all residents. As Moderator, I thank you for your ongoing support of the process and look forward to seeing you on May 25.